



Highlights from the RCOG World Congress

For more on the **systematic review on pertussis vaccine uptake** see *PLoS One* 2019; **14**: e0214538

For more on **racial differences in GBS colonisation of pregnant women** see *BJOG* 2019; published online Feb 7. DOI:10.1111/1471-0528.15648

For more on **restoration of the infant microbiota by neonatal seeding** see *Nat Med* 2016; **22**: 250–53

This year's Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (RCOG) World Congress (held in London, June 17–19) opened with bold and hopeful claims from RCOG President, Lesley Regan. 2019 marks the college's 90th anniversary and, as stated by Regan, the start of a new era. The RCOG will move its focus from disease intervention to prevention, and aim to empower women to better manage their own wellbeing, she said.

These themes were echoed throughout the conference, most notably in a session on maternal vaccination. Asma Khalil (St George's University Hospital, UK) discussed the factors most likely to persuade pregnant women to accept vaccination. A recommendation by their obstetrician appears most influential, particularly if vaccination is done during the same visit. She also cited data on pertussis vaccine uptake, which found that

vaccine provision by midwives during standard antenatal care improved uptake from 20% to 90%, and that use of an automated reminder in electronic medical records was associated with an improvement from 48% to 97%.

Philip Steer (Imperial College London, UK) spoke about group B streptococcus (GBS). In 2002, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention adopted a universal culture-based screening approach, in which most women are screened and those with relevant indications receive intrapartum prophylaxis. The UK, by contrast, uses a risk-based approach to screening that, Steer claimed, might be less effective. He announced that a large cluster-randomised controlled study to compare these approaches (GBS-3) had just secured funding. Steer also discussed the variance in GBS colonisation of pregnant women of different ethnicities, perhaps

linked to differences in their vaginal microbiomes.

The vaginal microbiome was also the focus of a plenary lecture by Tine Dalsgaard Clausen (Nordsjællands Hospital, Denmark). Clausen discussed the controversial topic of neonatal seeding, in which babies born by caesarean section are swabbed with vaginal bacteria. Infants born by caesarean section are thought to be more disease prone and to have different gut microbiota. Citing a 2016 study, Clausen noted that neonatal seeding seems to reproduce the same skin and mouth microbiome as in vaginally delivered babies, but not the gut microbiome. She proposed that vaginal birth could transfer faecal strains to the newborn gut, or that bacteria could access the fetal gut through the amniotic fluid or the bloodstream.

Kate V McIntosh



Infectious disease surveillance update

For more on **Ebola in DR Congo** see <https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=89e5755d2cca4840b1af93176&id=ddc3bfc46f>

For more on **typhoid in Pakistan** see <https://www.promedmail.org/post/6539573>

For more on **hepatitis A virus in Florida** see <http://outbreaknewstoday.com/florida-reports-90-additional-hepatitis-a-cases-last-week-24415/>

For more on **dengue in Brazil** see <http://outbreaknewstoday.com/brazil-nearly-600k-dengue-cases-through-early-june-chikungunya-update-17553/>

Ebola in DR Congo

As of July 1, 2354 cases of Ebola virus disease have been reported in the epidemic affecting Ituri and North Kivu provinces in DR Congo, of which 2260 are confirmed and 94 are probable cases. 1586 deaths have been reported and 654 patients have recovered. An additional 402 suspected cases are under investigation. On June 30, a new health zone—Ariwara, in Ituri province—reported a case. Investigations have identified 177 of the patient's contacts who are being followed up; 40 have been vaccinated so far.

On June 11, the Ministry of Health of Uganda confirmed a case of Ebola virus infection in Kasese district. The patient was a 5-year-old child from DR Congo who died of his illness on June 12. The child's grandmother and his younger brother were confirmed as positive on June 12; the grandmother died

later that day. 27 contacts have been identified and are being followed up.

Typhoid in Pakistan

On June 18, two children from a village in Malir district, near Karachi, Pakistan, were reported to have died from extensively drug-resistant typhoid. 122 cases of typhoid have been reported from the village since the announcement. 51 cases have been confirmed, of which five were extensively drug resistant. Authorities are planning a mass vaccination campaign in Karachi. From November, 2016, to May, 2019, 10 677 people have tested positive for typhoid in Sindh province, with 7109 extensively drug-resistant cases.

Hepatitis A virus in Florida, USA

During June 23–29, 2019, 90 cases of hepatitis A were reported in

Florida by the state department of health. Since the outbreak began in 2018, 2266 cases have been reported in Florida, with 1718 cases this year so far. Pasco County has reported the most cases in 2019 (n=329), followed by Pinellas (296), Volusia (141), Orange (132), and Hillsborough (107). 22 deaths have so far been associated with this outbreak.

Dengue in Brazil

From Jan 1, to June 8, 2019, Brazil has reported 1 127 244 probable dengue cases. Of these cases, 596 381 have been confirmed (including 366 deaths), and 453 cases remain under investigation. This number of cases in 2019 is substantially greater than the 170 628 cases reported in the same period in 2018.

Ruth Zwizwai